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UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

FOR SECURITY ASSISTANCE, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

WASHINGTON

July 25, 1981

S/S-S

The Editor

TMA

The New York Times

TME

229 West 43rd Street

TMC

New York, New York 10036

NEA

PM

S/P

RF

(DTM)

Dear Sir:

In his Op-Ed article "India, and Reagan's Tilt towards Pakistan" (July 15), Selig S. Harrison attacks the Reagan Administration's policy of support for Pakistan. Since the article seriously distorts the intent and character of the present policy towards South and Southwest Asia on the basis of purported statements by Administration officials, I believe it necessary to set the record straight.

The underlying premise of our current initiative is that a secure, stable and independent Pakistan is essential to the stability of the entire region. The same obviously can be said for India with whom we also seek a strong and constructive relationship.

It is not India, however, which is immediately threatened by the presence of 85,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan and the bullying posture of Moscow. Pakistan is under great pressure from the Soviet Union -- sharply increased in recent months -- and needs outside support in order to be able to continue to resist that pressure.

Along with Pakistan's other friends in the region and in the West, we are providing that necessary support. Economic assistance to Pakistan from both the Aid-to-Pakistan Consortium and other nations has risen substantially in the last 18 months. The United States, other Western nations and Japan have agreed to a re-scheduling of Pakistan's current external debt. Pakistan currently shelters over two million Afghan refugees. International contributions to the refugee relief program sponsored by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees have been generous, including some \$93 million from the United States alone this year. Pakistan, nevertheless, continues to bear half the total cost of refugee support.

Drafted by: S/P:FFukuyama/NEA/PAB:RP/NEA/INS:HSchaffer/jan
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Our proposed program of economic assistance and military sales should be seen in this context. It is designed to give Pakistan confidence that it will be able to sustain economic growth and provide for a vitally-needed and substantial military modernization program over the next five years. The acquisition of F-16 aircraft by Pakistan is a reasonable element in Pakistan's plans to replace and upgrade existing obsolete military equipment in order to meet the new challenges it faces following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. While a technologically-sophisticated aircraft, the limited number of F-16s Pakistan is likely to purchase will not pose an offensive threat to any of Pakistan's neighbors.

India has, of course, already achieved an impressive degree of security due to its size, internal stability, economic strength, favorable geopolitical position and, not least, because of a large, long-range military procurement program. India's strength and stability are assets of great value in this troubled region. Our fundamental security interests and those of India are not in conflict.

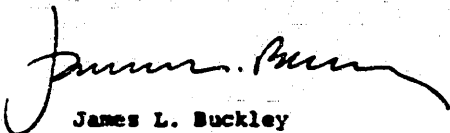
We are aware of Indian concerns regarding the acquisition of US military equipment by Pakistan. India has, however, undertaken a broad-based effort to modernize her own air, naval and ground forces in recent years, including present and future acquisition of large numbers of modern, sophisticated aircraft. India's overall military advantage is substantial and the proposed sales to Pakistan will not significantly alter the basic balance of power in the subcontinent.

In his article, Mr. Harrison touched on the danger of nuclear proliferation in the region. The Administration's decision to support Pakistan does not represent a slackening of US efforts to control the spread of nuclear weapons. In place of the ineffective sanctions on Pakistan's nuclear program imposed by the past Administration, we hope to address through conventional means the underlying sources of insecurity that prompt a nation like Pakistan to seek a nuclear capability in the first place.

We know that India shares our desire to see a stable and secure Pakistan capable of playing a responsible role in the region. We are confident that our Indian friends

will over time find that our support for Pakistan will serve that end and in no way threaten India or Indian interests. In this regard, we are encouraged by the recent reaffirmation by leaders in both New Delhi and Islamabad of their commitment to the vital process of building better relations between these two neighbors.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "James L. Buckley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

James L. Buckley

RESTRICTED